

## **Memorandum**

**To:** Planning Commission

**From:** Pete Sullivan, Senior Planner, 556-2406

**Date:** May 11, 2012

**Subject: Study Session, proposed Zoning Code Amendment:**

- Eliminate requirement for applicants for new single family homes and additions/modifications thereof to relocate utility distribution lines underground along public rights-of-way, and
- clarify code provisions to request exemptions for other types of development.

### **PURPOSE**

Enclosed materials are provided for Planning Commission review in advance of the May 23, 2012, initial study session regarding proposed Zoning Code Amendments related to utility undergrounding. A Technical Committee report with proposed text amendments is attached. Please note, environmental review is not yet complete; a Determination of Non-Significance is anticipated, and will be available for review upon completion. A SEPA checklist was completed for this proposal on April 27, 2012.

### **BACKGROUND**

This proposal follows through with 2011 Planning Commission and City Council direction to develop code amendments that exempt minor residential development from requirements to underground utility distribution lines along public rights of way.

Prior to arriving at that recommendation, the Planning Commission explored three alternative concepts for implementing Comprehensive Plan policies UT-14 and UT-15, which direct the City to relocate aerial utilities underground as part of public and private development projects. The matter initially came before the Planning Commission concurrent with the Commission's review of the Comprehensive Plan's Utilities Element, updated in 2011 as part of the overall 2010-11 periodic update of the Comprehensive Plan.

Comprehensive Plan policy changes for utility undergrounding were not proposed, but the Commission did review alternative concepts for implementing utility undergrounding provisions at the Zoning Code level. In particular, the objective was to explore alternative concepts that avoid potentially burdensome costs for new homes and remodels to existing single family homes,

while continuing to implement UT-14 and UT-15 by directing larger development projects to relocate aerial utilities underground.

The Planning Commission and City Council suggested staff follow up with exemption-based code amendments for single family residential development, and, aim to clarify what criteria the Technical Committee use in its case-by-case review of short plats.

The attached Technical Committee report provides additional background about the alternatives explored in 2011, and why the recommended approach was selected. It also discusses the Technical Committee's 2012 follow-on code development, and reasons for not including additional criteria for short plats in the Zoning Code. Improvements have been made that clarify the mechanism by which any type of development can petition the Technical Committee for relief from utility undergrounding requirements.

**MEETING PREPARATION**

Please review the Technical Committee Report and recommended amendments, and identify any discussion topics, questions and comments in advance of the May 23 meeting.

**REVIEW SCHEDULE**

The Planning Commission's upcoming review schedule for this item is as follows:

- Initial study session.....May 23
- Public hearing and study session: .....May 30
- Report Approval.....June 13

**QUESTIONS**

Please contact Pete Sullivan at (425) 556-2406, ppsullivan@redmond.gov with questions and for additional information.

**ATTACHMENTS**

- A) Technical Committee Report – Capital Facilities and Utilities Elements
- B) Proposed Zoning Code Amendment – RZC 21.54: *Adequate Public Facilities and Undergrounding of Utilities*